



# TOWN OF MONROE

## TOWN COUNCIL

### REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Session # 2021-03

Regular Meeting - Monday, February 8, 2021 – 8:00 P.M.

**PRESENT:** Chairperson Enid Lipeles  
Vice-Chairman Sean O'Rourke  
Councilmember Jennifer Aguilar  
Councilmember Jonathan Formichella  
Councilmember Dee Dee Martin (**via phone**)  
Councilmember Jason Maur (**via phone**)  
Councilmember Kevin Reid (**via phone**)  
Councilmember Terry Rooney (**via phone**)  
Councilmember Tony Scott

**ABSENT:** None

**ALSO PRESENT:** First Selectman Kenneth Kellogg

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#### **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Chairperson Lipeles led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairperson Lipeles stated that this is a hybrid meeting. She further stated that Town Council Members, designated staff, invited presenters, and members of the Press may attend in-person or remotely.

Public access to this meeting will be limited to joining this meeting as follows:

1. **A LIMITED NUMBER of IN-PERSON** public attendees will be permitted, based upon the reduced capacity of the meeting room, pursuant to the Governor's Executive Orders. **Any member of the public wishing to attend in-person must email [Meetings@MonroeCT.org](mailto:Meetings@MonroeCT.org) at least 24 hours in advance. You will be notified as to whether or not space is available.**
2. **ALL MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC may attend remotely as follows:**
  - Via computer, tablet or smartphone at this link: <https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/302687541>
  - Via phone at: 1-571-317-3122, Access Code: 302-687-541

Please refer to further information provided at the end of this agenda regarding this remote electronic meeting and the use of GoToMeeting.

Written public comments in compliance with the Guidelines for Public Participation in Remote Electronic Meetings may be submitted in up to one hour in advance of the meeting via electronic mail to [towncouncil@monroect.org](mailto:towncouncil@monroect.org).

#### **CONSENT CALENDAR**

- A. Approval of the minutes and voting record of the Town Council Regular Meeting held on January 25, 2021 (Session 2021-02).

- B. Acceptance of the Tax Collector's Request for Refunds in the amount of \$23,191.16.
- C. Acceptance of donations received for the following programs:
  - Emergency Management: In-Kind donations of pizza for vaccine clinic volunteers
  - Food Pantry: \$6,201.00
  - Project Warmth: \$1,575.00
  - Senior Center: \$60.00
- D. **Resolution #21-12: RESOLVED**, that the Town Council hereby approves the First Selectman's reappointment of **Mary Hall (D)** of 1014 Monroe Turnpike to the Economic Development Commission with a term ending January 31, 2026.
- E. **Resolution #21-13: RESOVLED**, that Kenneth M. Kellogg, the First Selectman of the Town of Monroe, is authorized to execute and deliver on behalf of the Town of Monroe, the 2020-2021 Memorandum of Understanding and any associated documents by and between United Way of Coastal Fairfield County for COVID-19 relief for town residents in need.

### **COMMUNICATIONS**

- A. Memo from the Tax Collector to the Town Council Chair dated February 2, 2021 regarding Request for Refunds.
- B. Memo from the First Selectman to the Town Council Chair dated February 3, 2021 regarding donations for various departments and programs.
- C. Memo from the First Selectman to the Town Council Chair dated February 3, 2021 regarding reappointments to various boards and commissions.
- D. Letter of Opinion from the Town Attorney to the First Selectman dated February 3, 2021 regarding 2021-2021 Memorandum of Understanding by and between United Way of Coastal Fairfield County.
- E. Memo from the First Selectman to the Town Council Chair dated February 4, 2021 regarding 2020-2021 Memorandum of Understanding by and between United Way of Coastal Fairfield County.
- F. Memo from the First Selectman to the Town Council Chair dated February 3, 2021 regarding an appointment to the Library Board of Trustees.
- G. Memo from the First Selectman to the Town Council Chair dated February 4, 2021 regarding an appointment to the Conservation and Water Resources Commission.
- H. Memo from the First Selectman to the Town Council Chair dated February 4, 2021 regarding an appointment to the Parks & Recreation Commission.

### **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Nick Kapoor, 109 Meadows End Road, stated that he advocates for people to be appointed to boards and commissions in a different way than what we currently do. He stated that the Democrats are at a disadvantage. He stated that some of the boards and commissions have been unfilled for 14 months. He then stated that there appears to be an unwritten rule that each political party has a certain number of seats allocated to them. He stated that this shouldn't be. He suggests that the "rules" be better and more equitable for all so that people can serve the town.

### **APPOINTMENTS**

- A. **Resolution #21-14:** To consider and act upon a resolution approving the appointment of **Susan Koneff (D)** of 7 Georges Lane to the Library Board of Trustees for a term ending November 30, 2023.  
**Motion: (D. Martin)**  
**RESOLVED**, that the Monroe Town Council hereby approves the First Selectman's appointment of **Susan Koneff (D)** of 7 Georges Lane to the Library Board of Trustees with a term ending November

30, 2023.

**Second: (J. Maur)**

**Discussion:** *Councilmember Martin* stated that Ms. Koneff is a 44 year resident of Monroe. Susan was an educator in the Monroe Public Schools for 26 years, and a Registrar of Voters for the town for 12 years. Her library experience includes being a founding member of the first library in New Jersey, serving on the Monroe Library Board in the late seventies and early eighties as well as currently serving as a volunteer at the library, making her a great fit to serve on the Library Board of Trustees. This appointment fills the vacancy created by the resignation of Christa DeLeo.

**Motion passed 9-0**

- B. Resolution #21-15:** To consider and act upon a resolution approving the appointment of **Samantha Spino (D)** of 104 Sentry Hill Road to the Conservation and Water Resources Commission for a term ending December 5, 2021.

**Motion: (D. Martin)**

**RESOLVED**, that the Monroe Town Council hereby approves the First Selectman's appointment of **Samantha Spino (D)** of 104 Sentry Hill Road to the Conservation & Water Resources Commission with a term ending December 5, 2021.

**Second: (J. Aguilar)**

**Discussion:** *Councilmember Martin* stated that Ms. Spino is a CPA and Senior Manager at CFGI, a Stamford accounting consulting firm. With over 13 years of experience in accounting and finance, she has spent her career helping companies through a wide range of routine and complex business scenarios. Samantha believes her leadership experience would make her an asset to the commission. This appointment fills the vacancy created by the resignation of Cynthia Giancaspro.

**Motion passed 9-0**

Ms. Giancaspro was in attendance and was sworn in to her commission.

- C. Resolution #21-16:** To consider and act upon a resolution approving the appointment of **Cynthia Giancaspro (R)** of 20 Wild Horse Court to the Parks & Recreation Commission for a term ending October 21, 2023.

**Motion: (T. Rooney)**

**RESOLVED**, that the Monroe Town Council hereby approves the First Selectman's appointment of **Cynthia Giancaspro (R)** of 20 Wild Horse Court to the Parks & Recreation Commission for a term ending October 21, 2023.

**Second: (S. O'Rourke)**

**Discussion:** *Councilmember Rooney* stated that Cynthia Giancaspro has a BS degree in horticulture from Colorado State University, and has been a high school science teacher for 18 years where she teaches honors level courses. Prior to her teaching career, she was employed for 10 years as a curator for the Brooklyn Botanic Garden. In addition to her curator duties, she was also instrumental in the development and delivery of innovative adult education courses. Cynthia has previously served on the Monroe Conservation and Water Resources Commission since 2014 and is a member of the Monroe Land Trust. This appointment fills the vacancy created by the resignation of Tony Scott.

*Councilmember Maur* stated that it is the duty to vote on the merits of any person nominated for boards or commissions. As such, Ms. Giancaspro is abundantly qualified for this position. He further stated that she has his full support and feels that she will do a great job. *Councilmember Reid* stated that from an L & A perspective, yes we need to have these positions filled. However, this does not

have the same urgency as other tasks especially during the pandemic. *Councilmember Scott* stated that he appreciates the good job that First Selectman Kellogg is doing.

**Motion passed 9-0**

### **ACTION ITEMS**

#### ***Town Council Committee on Planning & Zoning, Public Works and Park & Recreation Matters***

*Councilmember Martin* stated that they are anticipating having a Special Meeting as they did not have a quorum at the last meeting. There was also a technological issue.

#### ***Town Council Committee on Legislative & Administrative Matters***

*Councilmember Reid* stated that L & A met and all of the items that were discussed at L&A are before Council this evening. They also discussed the Cell Tower. There is still a bit of work to be completed. They will be back on the agenda for the next meeting.

#### ***Town Council EMS Building Committee***

*Councilmember Rooney* stated that they had a walk through at Jockey Hollow. Cost estimates have to be in by February 16<sup>th</sup>. At that time they will have a better idea of the total cost for this project. *Councilmember Aguilar* asked about the Steep grant. She stated that it was supposed to expire last year. She asked if there was an extension. She was told that it had been extended.

#### **First Selectman's Update**

*First Selectman Kellogg* stated that case rates continue to improve slightly. Monroe's average case rate is down to 6 new cases per day. The 2-week case rate is now 30.8 cases per 100,000 of the population. The overall case totals in Monroe, as of 2/7/2021, are 987 cases and 12 deaths (confirmed and probable since the beginning of the pandemic).

*First Selectman Kellogg* stated with regard to the vaccinations the Governor announced that individuals age 65 and over may begin scheduling vaccinations as of Thursday 2/11/2021. He further explained that to make an appointment there are two options: either register or make appointment in VAMS. This is a multi-step process. Step by step instructions are available at:

<https://portal.ct.gov/Coronavirus/COVID-19-Vaccinations---VAMS-Support>, or contact Connecticut's Vaccine Appointment Assist Line at 877-918-2224, seven days a week from 8:00 am to 8:00 pm. One can also contact Monroe COVID Vaccine Info Line at 203-452-2862; and leave a message if necessary for a return call. *First Selectman Kellogg* then stated that the statewide expectation is that it will take approximately one month to complete the 1st dose in the 65+ group, based upon vaccine supply. He further stated that they are continuing to conduct outreach and assist those over 75 with obtaining vaccinations. We continue to conduct weekly vaccination clinics in Monroe; the largest weekly delivery of vaccine was received February 8<sup>th</sup>. We are scheduling 400 appointments this week (February 8<sup>th</sup> through February 12<sup>th</sup>).

*First Selectman Kellogg* then stated that in other news New Executive Orders suspend the re-application filing requirements for state and local tax relief programs for Veterans, the elderly, and disabled. In addition the limits on indoor religious gatherings have been relaxed to allow up to 50% of the venue's capacity, with no cap, provided that masks and social distancing rules are followed. He added that the rules for restaurants have relaxed to extend the closing time for indoor dining to 11:00 pm.

*First Selectman Kellogg* stated that tonight's budget presentation, as well as the full budget document, will be posted on the Town's website. A budget schedule, with proposed meeting dates based upon preliminary discussions with the Town Council and Board of Finance Chairs, was included in Council's packets for further discussion tonight.

*First Selectman Kellogg* stated that the Town applied for and received two grants, awarded to our Community & Social Services Department, for COVID-19 relief purposes:

- \$4,000 from the United Way (need-based financial support or mental health services).
- \$2,500 from the State Department of Aging and Disability Services to provide for social isolation activity kits for senior citizens.

*First Selectman Kellogg* then stated that Wolfe Park and Great Hollow Lake have been awarded the Landmark Legacy Award by the Connecticut chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects. This category recognizes distinguished landscape architecture projects completed between 15 and 50 years ago that retains their original design integrity and contributes significantly to the public realm of the community. The peer jury, consisting of practitioners located in Georgia, referenced park as "timeless" that is "very well received and used."

*Councilmember Maur* stated that other municipalities have created a waiting list for people to get the COVID-19 vaccination from the leftover doses at the end of the day so there wasn't any wasted. He asked if there was such a list for Monroe residents. *First Selectman Kellogg* stated that we do have a list. However, there 0 haven't been any vaccines leftover.

#### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS - None**

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

**A.** Acceptance of the following donations that individually exceed \$1,500.00:

- \$2958.79 from Santa Energy Corporation

**Motion:** (S. O'Rourke)

To accept the very generous donation of \$2958.79 from Santa Energy Corporation

**Second:** (J. Formichella)

**Discussion:** *First Selectman Kellogg* stated that he wished to thank Santa Energy Corporation for their very generous donation.

**Motion passed 9-0**

**B. Discussion of preliminary budget dates**

*First Selectman Kellogg* stated that the first date is on 2/18/2021. This will be a joint meeting of the Board of Finance and the Town Council for a half hour. The Town Council will then have a Special meeting directly after that to conduct a Public Hearing and then a determination of what Department Workshops Council would like to see. After that the Budget Workshops will be held on 2/23/2021 and 3/1/2021. On 3/8/2021, Town Council will hold their regularly scheduled meeting to address follow up items as needed. There are two more proposed meetings on 3/11/2021 and 3/15/2021 if needed.

**Motion:** (E. Lipeles)

To approve the Budget dates as proposed. **Second:** (J. Formichella)

**Discussion:** *Chairperson Lipeles* stated that she met with the Administrative Assistant and reviewed all of the proposed meeting dates and verified that there were no conflicts.

**Motion passed 9-0**

**SECOND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Steve Kirsch, 35 Apple Gate Lane, asked with regard to the budget meeting dates, will the dates be placed on the budget section of the web site. He was told that it would be placed on that section in the morning.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Chairperson Lipeles adjourned the meeting at 9:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Carol Sardinha  
Town Council Clerk